A

# LETTER

TO

HIS GRACE,

## THE DUKE OF GRAFTON,

First Commiſſioner of His Majeſty's Treaſury.

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*Vacare culpâ magnum eſt ſolatium; præſertim cum habeam duas res quibus me ſuſtentem, optimarum artium ſcientiam, & maximarum rerum gloriam, quarum altera mihi vivo nunquam eripietur, altera ne mortuo quidem.*

CICERO.

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BERLIN.

M. DCC. LXVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

*Paris. Dec.* 12. 1766.

MY LORD,

I am not yet recover'd from the aſtonishment, into which I was thrown by your grace's *verbal* meſſage, in anſwer to my letter of the firſt of November. In a converſation I had with *Colonel Fitzroy* at the Hotel d'Eſpagne, he did me the honour, of aſſuring me, that I shou'd find his Brother my real and ſincere friend, extremely deſirous to concur in doing me juſtice, that he was to tell me this from your grace, but that many intereſting particulars relative to me cou'd not be communicated by letter, nor by the poſt. I fondly believ'd theſe

obliging aſſurances, becauſe on a variety of occaſions your grace had teſtified a full approbation of my conduct, had thank'd me in the moſt flattering terms as the perſon the moſt uſefull to the common cauſe in which we were embark'd, and had shewn an uncommon zeal to ſerve a man who had ſuffer'd ſo much in the cauſe of liberty.

I return'd to England with the gayeſt, and the moſt lively hopes. As ſoon as I arriv'd at London, I deſir'd my excellent friend, Mr *Fitzherbert*, to wait on your grace, with every profeſſion of regard on my part, and the reſolution I had taken of entirely ſubmitting the mode of the application I shou'd make to the throne for my pardon. I cannot expreſs the anxiety, which your grace's anſwer gave me, *Mr Wilkes muſt write to Lord Chatham.* I then beg'd Mr *Fitzherbert* to ſtate the reaſons, which made it impoſſible for me to follow that advice, from every principle of honour, both public and private. I shew'd too the impropriety of ſupplicating a fellow ſubject for mercy, the *prerogative*

good Kings are the moſt jealous of, by far the brighteſt jewel in their crown, and the attribute, by which they may the neareſt approach to the Divinity.

I afterwards wrote the letter to your grace, which I have ſeen in all the public prints. I never receiv'd any other anſwer but a *verbal* meſſage, Mr *Wilkes muſt write to Lord Chatham: I do nothing without Lord Chatham.* When I found that my pardon was to be bought with the ſacrifice of my honour, I had the virtue not to heſitate. I ſpurn'd at the propoſal, and left my dear native London with a heart full of grief that my faireſt hopes were blaſted, of humiliation that I had given an eaſy faith to the promiſes of a Miniſter and a Courtier, and of aſtonishment that a nobleman of parts and diſcernment cou'd continue in an infatuation, from which the conduct of *Lord Chatham* had recover'd every other man in the nation. He was indeed long the favourite character of our countrymen. Every tongue was wanton in his praiſe. The whole people lavish'd on him their choiceſt favours, and endeavour'd by

the nobleſt means, by an unbounded generoſity and confidence, to have kept him virtuous. With what anguish were we at laſt undeceiv'd! How much it coſt us to give up a man, who had ſo long entirely kept poſſeſſion of our hearts! How cruel was the ſtruggle! But alas! how is he chang'd? how fallen? from what height fallen? His glorious ſun is ſet, I believe never to riſe again.

We long hop'd, my Lord, that public virtue was the *guide* of his actions, and the love of our country his ruling paſſion, but he has fully shewn *omnis vis virtusque in linguâ ſita eſt.* Our hearts glow'd with gratitude for the important ſervices he had done againſt the common enemy, and the voice of the nation hail'd him our deliverer; but private ambition was all the while skulking behind the ſhield of the patriot, and at length in an evil hour made him quit the ſcene of all his glory, the only place, in which he cou'd be truly uſefull, for a retreat, where he knew it was impoſſible the confidence of the people cou'd follow,

but where he might in inglorious eaſe bear his BLUSHING *honours thick upon him.*

I might now, my Lord, expoſtulate with your grace on a *verbal* meſſage, and of ſuch a nature, in anſwer to a letter couch'd in the moſt decent and reſpectfull terms, coming too from a late member of the legiſlature. I might regret, that the largeſt proffers of friendſhip, and real ſervice, cou'd mean no more than two or three words of cold advice, that I shou'd apply to another. I might be tempted to think it a duty of office in the firſt Lord of the Treaſury to have ſubmitted to his Majeſty a petition relative to the exerciſe of the nobleſt act of regal power, which any conſtitution can give any ſovereign. Surely, my Lord, my application to the firſt Commiſſioner of the Treaſury, who is always conſider'd as the firſt Miniſter in England, was the very proper application. As I had made no diſcovery of any new wonderfull pill or drop, nor pretended to the ſecret of curing the gout or the tooth ach, I never thought of ſoliciting *Lord Chatham for a privy ſeal.* His Lordship's office was neither impor-

tant, nor reſponſible. I will not however enlarge on this, but I ſhall deſire your grace's permiſſion fully to ſtate what has happen'd to me as a private gentleman relative to *Lord Chatham*, becauſe I wou'd not leave a doubt concerning the propriety of my conduct, in a mind naturally ſo candid, and ſo capable of judging truly, as that of the *Duke of Grafton*.

I believe that the flinty heart of *Lord Chatham* has known the ſweets of private friendſhip, and the fine feelings of humanity, as little as even Lord Mansfield. They are both form'd to be admir'd, not belov'd. A proud, inſolent, overbearing, ambitious man is always full of the ideas of his own importance, and vainly imagines himſelf ſuperior to the equality neceſſary among real friends, in all the moments of true enjoyment. Friendſhip is too pure a pleaſure for a mind canker'd with ambition, or the luſt of power and grandeur. *Lord Chatham* declar'd in Parliament the ſtrongeſt attachment to *Lord Temple*, one of the greateſt characters our country cou'd ever boaſt, and

ſaid *he wou'd live and die with his noble brother.* He has receiv'd obligations of the firſt magnitude from that *noble brother*, yet what trace of gratitude or of friendship was ever found in any part of his conduct? and has he not now declar'd the moſt open variance, and even hoſtility? I have had as warm and expreſs declarations of regard as cou'd be made by this marble-hearted friend, and *Mr Pitt* had no doubt his views in even feeding me with flattery from time to time; on occaſions too where candour and indulgence were all I cou'd claim. He may remember the compliments he paid me on two certain poems in the year 1754. If I were to take the declarations made by himſelf and the late *Mr Potter à la lettre*, they were more charm'd with thoſe verſes after the ninety ninth reading than after the firſt; ſo that from this circumſtance, as well as a few of his ſpeeches in Parliament, it ſeems to be likewiſe true of the firſt orator, or rather the firſt comedian, of our age, *non diſplicuiſſe illi jocos, ſed non contigiſſe.*

I will now ſubmit to your grace, if there was not ſomething peculiarly baſe and perfidious in *Mr Pitt's* calling me a *blaſphemer of my God* for thoſe very verſes, at a time when I was abſent, and dangerouſly ill from an affair of honour. The charge too he knew was falſe, for the whole ridicule of thoſe two pieces was confin'd to certain myſteries, which formerly the *unplac'd and unpenſion'd Mr Pitt* did not think himſelf oblig'd even to affect to believe. He added another charge equally unjuſt, that I was the *libeller of my king*, tho' he was ſenſible that I never wrote a ſingle line diſreſpectfull to the ſacred perſon of my ſovereign, but had only attack'd the deſpotiſm of his miniſters, with the ſpirit becoming a good ſubject, and zealous friend of his country. The reaſon of this perfidy was plain. He was then beginning to pay homage to the *Scottish* Idol, and I was the moſt acceptable ſacrifice he cou'd offer at the ſhrine of BUTE. Hiſtory ſcarcely gives ſo remarkable a change. He was a few years ago the mad, ſeditious Tribune of the People, inſulting his

Sovereign even in his capital city, now he is the abject, crouching deputy of the proud Scot, who he declar'd in Parliament *wanted wisdom, and held principles incompatible with freedom*; a moſt ridiculous character ſurely for a ſtateſman, and the ſubject of a free kingdom, but the very proper compoſition for a *favourite*. Was it poſſible for me after this to write a ſuppliant letter to *Lord Chatham*? I am the firſt to pronounce myſelf moſt unworthy of a pardon, if I cou'd have obtain'd it on thoſe terms.

Altho' I declare, my Lord, that the conſcious pride of virtue makes me look down with contempt on a man, who cou'd be guilty of this baſeneſs, who cou'd in the lobby declare that I muſt be ſupported, and in the Houſe on the ſame day deſert and revile me, yet I will on every occaſion do juſtice to the Miniſter. He has ſerv'd the public in all thoſe points, where the good of the nation coincided with his own private views; and in no other. I venerate the memory of the Secretary, and I think it an honour to myſelf that I ſteadily ſupported in

Parliament an adminiſtration, the moſt ſucceſsfull we ever had, and which carried the glory of the nation to the higheſt pitch in every part of the world. He found his country almoſt in deſpair. He rais'd the noble ſpirit of England, and ſtrain'd every nerve againſt our enemies. His plans, when in power, were always great, tho' in direct oppoſition to the declarations of his whole life, when out of power. The invincible bravery of the British troops gave ſucceſs even to the moſt rash, the moſt extravagant, the moſt deſperate of his projects. He ſaw early the hoſtile intentious of Spain, and if the *written advice* had been follow'd, a very few weeks had then probably clos'd the laſt general war; altho' the merit of that *advice* was more the merit of his *noble brother*, than his own. After the omnipotence of Lord Bute in 1761 had forc'd Mr Pitt to retire from his Majeſty's Councils, and the cauſe was declar'd by himſelf to be our conduct relative to Spain, I had the happineſs of ſetting that affair in ſo clear and advantageous a light, that

he expreſs'd the moſt entire ſatisfaction, and particular obligations to my friendship. I do not however make this a claim of merit to Mr Pitt. It was my duty, from the peculiar advantages of information I then had.

The conſtitution of our country has no obligations to him. He has left it with all it's beauties, and all it's' blemishes. He never once appear'd in earneſt about any queſtion of liberty. He was the cauſe that in 1764 no point was gain'd for the public in the two great queſtions of GENERAL WARRANTS, and the SEIZURE OF PAPERS. The curſed remains of the court of Star Chamber, the enormous power of the Attorney General, the ſole great judicial officer of the crown, who is *durante bene placito*, and not upon oath, who tramples on *Grand Juries*, and breaks down the firſt, the foremoſt barriers of liberty, continued during his adminiſtration the ſame as before. Every grievance, which was not rooted out by the glorious Revolution, and the later ſtruggles of our patriots, ſtill ſubſiſts in full force, notwithſtanding the

abſolute power he exercis'd for ſeveral years over every department of the ſtate. But I have done with *Lord Chatham*. I leave him to the poor conſolation of a place, a penſion, and a peerage, for which he has ſold the confidence of a great nation. Pity ſhall find, and weep over him.

I am now, my Lord, once more driven from the *Romans* to the gay, the polite *Athenians*, but I ſhall endeavour to convince your grace that I am not totally loſt to my country nor to myſelf, in this ſcene of elegant diſſipation, and that I do not waſte the time in unavailing complaints of my hard fate, and the ingratitude of thoſe I have ſerv'd with ſucceſs, for I ſhall very ſoon beg to call the public attention to ſome points of national importance, and in the mean time I ſhall embrace this opportunity of doing myſelf juſtice againſt the calumnies, which a reſtleſs faction does not ceaſe to propagate.

The affair of the GENERAL WARRANT, and the HABEAS CORPUS, is told very unfaithfully, and almoſt every particular, relative to my being made a priſoner, and ſent to the Tower on the

30th of April 1763, has been injuriouſly miſrepreſented in ſeveral late publications. I ſhall therefore ſtate the tranſactions of that memorable day, and I may appeal to the minutes taken at the time for the accuracy of this relation.

On my return from the city early in the morning, I met at the end of Great George Street one of the King's Meſſengers. He told me that he had a *warrant* to apprehend me, which he muſt execute immediately, and that I muſt attend him to Lord Halifax's. I deſir'd to ſee the *warrant*. He ſaid it was *againſt the authors, printers, and publishers of the North Briton*, n°. 45, and that his verbal orders were to arreſt *Mr Wilkes*. I told him the *warrant* did not reſpect me: I advis'd him to be very civil, and to uſe no violence in the ſtreet, for if he attempted force, I wou'd put him to death in the inſtant, but if he wou'd come quietly to my houſe, I wou'd convince him of the illegality of the *warrant*, and the injuſtice of the orders he had receiv'd. He choſe to accompany me home, and then

produc'd the *General Warrant*. I declar'd that ſuch a *warrant* was abſolutely illegal and void in itſelf, that it was a ridiculous *warrant* againſt the whole English nation, and I ask'd why he wou'd ſerve it on me, rather than on the Lord Chancellor, on either of the Secretaries, on Lord Bute, or Lord Corke, my next door neighbour. The anſwer was, *I am to arreſt Mr Wilkes*. About an hour afterwards two other Meſſengers arriv'd, and ſeveral of their aſſiſtants. They all endeavour'd in vain to perſuade me to accompany them to Lord Halifax's. I had likewiſe many civil meſſages from his Lordship to deſire my attendance. My only anſwer was, that I had not the honour of viſiting his Lordship, and this firſt application was rather rude and ungentlemanlike.

While ſome of the Meſſengers and their aſſiſtants were with me, *Mr Churchill* came into the room. I had heard that their *verbal* orders were likewiſe to apprehend him, but I ſuſpected they did not know his perſon, and by preſence of mind I had the happineſs of ſaving my friend. As ſoon as Mr

*Churchill* enter'd the room, I accoſted him, *Good morrow, Mr Thomſon. How does Mrs Thomſon do to-day? Does she dine in the country? Mr Churchill* thank'd me, ſaid she then waited for him, that he only came for a moment to ask me how I did, and almoſt directly took his leave. He went home immediately, ſecur'd all his papers, and retir'd into the country. The Meſſengers cou'd never get intelligence where he was. The following week he came to town, and was preſent both the days of hearing at the court of Common Pleas.

The whole morning paſs'd in meſſages between Lord Halifax and me. The buſineſs of the Meſſengers being ſoon publicly known, ſeveral of my friends came to me on ſo extraordinary an event. I deſir'd two or three of them to go to the court of COMMON PLEAS, to make affidavit of my being made a priſoner in my own houſe under an illegal *warrant*, and to demand the HABEAS CORPUS. The Chief Juſtice gave orders that it shou'd iſſue immediately.

A conſtable came afterwards with ſeveral aſſiſtants to the Meſſengers. I

repeatedly insisted on their all leaving me, and declar'd I wou'd not suffer anyone of them to continue in the room against my consent, for I knew and wou'd support the rights of an Englishman in the sanctuary of his own house. I was then threaten'd with immediate violence, and a regiment of the guards, if necessary. I soon found all resistance wou'd be vain. The constable demanded my sword, and insisted on my immediately attending the Messengers to Lord Halifax's. I replied, that if they were not assassins, they shou'd first give me their names in writing. They complied with this, and thirteen set their hands to the paper. I then got into my own chair, and proceeded to Lord Halifax's, guarded by the Messengers and their assistants.

I was conducted into a great apartment fronting the park, where Lord Halifax and Lord Egremont, the two Secretaries of state, were sitting at a table cover'd with paper, pens and ink. The under-secretaries stood near their Lordships. Mr Lovel Stanhope, the law clerk, and Mr Philip Carteret Webb, the solicitor of the Treasury, were the

only perſons beſides who attended. Lord Egremont receiv'd me with a ſupercilious, inſolent air; Lord Halifax with great politeneſs. I was deſir'd to take the chair near their Lordships, which I did. Lord Halifax then began, *that he was really concern'd that he had been neceſſitated to proceed in that manner againſt me, that it was exccedingly to be regretted that a gentleman of my rank and abilities cou'd engage againſt his King, and his Majeſty's government.* I replied, *that his Lordship cou'd not be more miſtaken, for the King had not a ſubject more zealouſly attach'd to his perſon and government than myſelf, that I had all my life been a warm friend of the Houſe of Brunſwick, and the Proteſtant Succeſſion, that while I made the trueſt profeſſions of duty to the King, I was equally free to declare in the ſame moment, that I believ'd no Prince had ever the misfortune of being ſerv'd by ſuch ignorant, inſolent, and deſpotic miniſters, of which my being there was a freſh, glaring proof, for I was brought before their Lordships by force, under a* GENERAL WARRANT, *which nam'd no body, in violation of the laws of my country, and of the privileges of Parlia-*

*ment, that I beg'd both their Lordships to remember my present declaration, that on the very first day of the ensuing session of Parliament, I wou'd stand up in my place and impeach them for the outrage they had committed in my person against the liberties of the people.* Lord Halifax answer'd, *that nothing had been done but by the advice of the best lawyers, and that it was now his duty to examine me.* He had in his hand a long list of questions, regularly number'd. He began, *Mr Wilkes, do you know Mr Kearsly? when did you see him? &c. &c.* I replied, *that I suspected there was a vain hope my answer wou'd tend rather to what his Lordship wish'd to know, that he seem'd to be lost in a dark, and intricate path, and really wanted much light to guide him thro' it, but that I cou'd assure his Lordship not a single ray shou'd come from me.* Lord Halifax return'd to the charge, *Mr Wilkes, do you know Mr Kearsly? &c. &c.* I said, *that this was a curiosity on his Lordship's part, which however laudable in the secretary, I did not find myself disposed to gratify, and that at the end of my examination all the quires of paper on their Lordships' table shoud be as milk white as at the beginning.*

Lord Halifax then *desir'd to remind me of my being their prisoner, and of their right to examine me.* I answer'd, *that I shou'd imagine their Lordships' time was too precious to be trifled away in that manner, that they might have seen before I wou'd never say one word they desir'd to know,* and I added, *Indeed, my Lords, I am not made of such slight, flimsy stuff;* then turning to Lord Egremont, I said, *Cou'd you employ tortures, I wou'd never utter a word unbecoming my honour, or affecting the sacred confidence of any friend. God has given me firmness and fidelity. You trifle away your time most egregiously, my Lords.* Lord Halifax then *advis'd me to weigh well the consequences of my conduct, and the advantages to myself of a* generous, *frank confession.* I lamented *the prostitution of the word,* GENEROUS, *to what I shou'd consider as an act of the utmost treachery, cowardice, and wickedness.* His Lordship then ask'd me, *if I chose to be a prisoner in my own house, at the Tower, or in Newgate, for he was dispos'd to oblige me.* I gave his Lordship my thanks, but *I desir'd to remark, that I never receiv'd an obligation, but from a friend,*

*that I demanded juſtice, and my immediate liberty, as an Engliſhman, who had not offended the laws of his country; that as to the reſt, it was beneath my attention, the odious idea of reſtraint was the ſame odious idea every where; that I wou'd go where I pleas'd, and if I was reſtrain'd by a ſuperior force, I muſt yield to the violence, but wou'd never give colour to it by a ſhamefull compromiſe; that every thing was indifferent to me in compariſon of my honour and my liberty; that I made my appeal to the laws, and had already by my friends applied to the* COURT OF COMMON PLEAS *for the* HABEAS CORPUS, *which the Chief Juſtice had actually order'd to be iſſued, and that I hop'd to owe my diſcharge ſolely to my innocence, and to the vigour of the law in a free country.* Lord Halifax then told me, *that I shou'd be ſent to the Tower, where I shou'd be treated in a manner ſuitable to my rank*, and that he *hop'd the Meſſengers had behav'd well to me.* I acknowledg'd that they had *behav'd with humanity, and even civility to me, notwithſtanding the ruffian orders given them by his Lordship's Colleague.* I then again turn'd to Lord Egremont, and ſaid,

*Your Lordship's verbal orders were to drag me out of my bed at midnight. The firſt man, who had enter'd my bedchamber by force, I shou'd have laid dead on the ſpot. Probably I shou'd have fallen in the skirmish with the others. I thank God, not your Lordship, that ſuch a ſcene of blood has been avoided. Your Lordship is very ready to iſſue orders, which you have neither the courage to ſign, nor I believe to juſtify.* No reply was made to this. The converſation drop'd. Lord Halifax retir'd into another apartment. Lord Egremont continued ſullen and ſilent about a quarter of an hour. I then made a few remarks on ſome capital pictures, which were in the room, and his Lordship left me alone.

I was afterwards conducted into another apartment. I found there ſeveral of my friends, in argument with the moſt infamous of all the tools of that adminiſtration, *Mr Philip Carteret Webb.* He confirm'd to me, that I was to be carried to the Tower, and *wish'd to know if I had any favours to ask.* I replied, *that I was us'd to confer, not to receive, favours, that I was ſuperior to the receiving any even from his Maſters,*

*that all I wou'd ſay to him was, if my valet de chambre was allow'd to attend me in the Tower, I shou'd be shav'd and have a clean shirt, if he was not, I shou'd have a long beard, and dirty linen.* Mr Webb ſaid, *that orders wou'd be given for his admiſſion at the Tower.* I complain'd of the shamefull evaſion of the *Habeas Corpus*, in ſending me to the Tower, tho' the orders of the *Chief Juſtice Pratt* were known. Mr Webb made no reply to this. He came to viſit me at the Tower in the beginning of my impriſonment, when I had not the permiſſion to ſee any friend. I deſir'd him almoſt at his firſt entrance to take his leave, *for if I was not allow'd to ſee thoſe I lov'd, I wou'd not ſee thoſe I deſpis'd.*

While I continued in the Tower, I was preſs'd to offer bail in order to regain my liberty, and two of the firſt nobility deſir'd to be my ſecurities in the ſum of L. 100,000 each. I was exceedingly gratefull for the offer, but wou'd not accept it. I obſerv'd, that neither my health, nor my ſpirits, were affected, that I won'd by great temperance and abſtinence endeavour to compenſate

compenſate the want of air and exerciſe, but if my health ſuffer'd in a dangerous way, I wou'd then accept ſuch generous offers, for I hop'd to live that ſo noble a cauſe might be brought to a glorious iſſue for the liberties of my country. From the beginning of this arduous buſineſs, I wou'd not on any occaſion give bail, by which I never involv'd any friend, and remain'd the perfect maſter of my own conduct.

I ſhall now, my Lord, proceed to do myſelf juſtice againſt a calumny of *Sir John Cuſt*, a perſon of the meaneſt natural parts, and infinitely beneath all regard, except from the office he bears, with the utmoſt diſcredit to himſelf, with equal diſgrace and inſufficiency to the public. I find in the volume of the *Journals of the Houſe of Commons*, juſt publish'd, vol. 29. p. 721. « Jovis 19° die » Januarii 1764. Mr Speaker acquain- » ted the Houſe, that he, upon » Tueſday laſt, received a Letter by » the General Poſt from Mr Wilkes, » dated Paris the 11th Inſtant, inclo- » ſing a paper in the French Language,

» purporting to be a Certificate of » one of the French King's Phyſicians, » and of a Surgeon of the ſaid King's » Army, relating to the ſtate of Mr » Wilkes's health, ſubſcribed with » Two Names, but not authenticated » before a Notary Public, nor the » Signature thereof verified in any » Manner whatſoever ». Then follow the *letter* and *certificate*. The inſinuation is too plain to be overlook'd, too falſe to be forgiven. The ſignature was verified by my letter. It is certain that the certificate was in all the uſual forms; yet tho' the affair was determin'd with reſpect to me, and I was indecently expell'd the *Houſe of Commons* on the ſame day, without any time being allow'd for other proof, a regard to truth, and my own honour, made me give the moſt compleat anſwer to this wretched ſubterfuge of the abandon'd *Majority*. I ſent a ſecond certificate in the unuſual form they had preſcrib'd themſelves, atteſted by two notaries, and confirm'd by the English Embaſſador. I wrote likewiſe again to the Speaker on the 5th of February following;

but neither the ſecond letter, certificate, or atteſtation, is to be found in the *Journals*, as they ought in juſtice to my character. I have however, my Lord, taken care that they shou'd be publish'd, for in a free government like our's, I will endeavour thro' my life to emulate the ſpirit of antient Rome, *provoco ad populum*; and while the people do not condemn me, I shall, perhaps in this, moſt certainly in every ſucceeding age, riſe ſuperior to any party cabal, or court faction. This ſtep cover'd my enemies with confuſion, but was of no farther ſervice to me. The party war againſt me ceas'd of courſe in the *Houſe of Commons*, but flam'd with equal fury in *Weſtminſter Hall*, and was attended with every circumſtance of revenge and cruelty, which the ingenious wit of a Manſfield cou'd deviſe to gratify the malice of a bad heart.

By the ſame JOURNALS, page 723, I find that I am voted *guilty of writing and publishing the paper, intituled* « The North Briton, N°. 45 », and that ſeveral witneſſes were examin'd. There is not however in the JOURNALS a ſin-

gle word of the evidence they gave, and it is well known that not one of them did, or cou'd, ſay any thing relative to the *authorship*. The evidence of the *publication* was exceeding ſlight, but the willingneſs of the judges made ample amends for the deficiency of the witneſſes, who were not upon oath. The Adminiſtration did not chuſe to riſk either of theſe charges againſt me even in the court of King's Bench, and I was only tried for a *re-publication*. I will never blush at the imputation of being the *author* of that paper, becauſe I know that truth is reſpected in every line. One circumſtance will ſoon fully appear to the indignant public. I mean the large debt on the *Civil Liſt*, contracted chiefly by the ſcandalous purchaſe of a Parliamentary approbation of the late ignominious *Peace*, the arbitrary *Exciſe*, and other ruinous meaſures of the *Scottish* Miniſter. But I leave the affair of the *Civil Liſt* to a future exact diſcuſſion.

The laſt calumny, my Lord, which I ſhall diſprove, reſpects the actions at law againſt Lord Halifax. It is ſaid that I have neglected, or purpoſely diſcon-

tinued them, ſince my exile. The imputation is totally groundleſs. I was ſo ill at Paris in the beginning of the year 1764 that it was impoſſible for me then to return to England alive, but I gave the moſt expreſs orders that the law proceedings shou'd be carried on with vigour, and in fact there was not a moment's delay. When my wound began to heal in the ſpring, I was diſſuaded by all my friends from returning to a country, where the ſame adminiſtration, which had illegally ſeiz'd my perſon, plunder'd my houſe, corrupted the fidelity of my ſervants, and by the wicked arts of an arbitrary Judge, who caus'd the *records to be falſified*, had juſt obtain'd two verdicts againſt me, were ſtill in full power. I yielded to theſe reaſons, becauſe *propter eorum ſcelus, nihil mihi intra meos parietes tutum, nihil inſidiis vacuum viderem.* Lord Halifax for near two years avail'd himſelf of every advantage, which privilege and the chicane of law cou'd furnish. He never enter'd any appearance to a Court of Juſtice, and the Common Pleas had, as far as they cou'd, punish'd ſuch an

open contempt, ſuch a daring proof that *Adminiſtration* wou'd not ſubmit to the *law of the land*, and had endeavour'd to compel his Lordship to appear. Towards the end of 1764 I was *outlaw'd*. The proceedings continued againſt his Lordship till that hour. He then appear'd, and his ſingle plea was, that as an *outlaw*, I cou'd not hold any action. No other defence was made againſt the heinous charge of having in my perſon violated the rights of the people.

I felt this, my Lord, as the moſt cruel ſtroke, which fortune had given me. Juſtice had at length overtaken many of the inferior criminals, but my *out-lawry* prevented my puniſhing, the great, the capital offender, when after all his ſubterfuges, he was almoſt within my reach. I pleaſe myſelf however with the reflexion that no miniſter has ſince dar'd to iſſue a GENERAL WARRANT, nor to ſign an order for the SEIZURE OF PAPERS. In the one the perſonal liberty of every ſubject is immediately concern'd. On the other may depend not only his own ſafety and property, but what will come

ſtill more home to a man of honour; the ſecurity, the happineſs of thoſe, with whom he is moſt intimately connected, their fortunes, their future views, perhaps ſecrets, the diſcovery of which wou'd drive the coldeſt ſtoic to deſpair, their very exiſtence poſſibly, all that is important in the public walk of life, all that is dear and ſacred in friendship and in love. I was the *laſt* oppreſs'd, but I was the *firſt* man, who had the courage to carry thro' a juſt reſiſtance to theſe acts of deſpotiſm. Now the opinions of our ſovereign Courts of Juſtice are known and eſtablish'd. I rejoice that ſeveral others, who ſuffer'd before me, have ſince made their appeal to the laws, and obtain'd redreſs. I hope the iron rod of miniſterial oppreſſion is at length broken, and that I am the laſt victim of violence and cruelty. I shall not then regret all the ſacrifices I have made, and my mind shall feaſt itſelf with the recollection in the unjuſt exile I am doom'd to ſuffer from my friends aud my native land.

I will now, my Lord, only add,

however unfashionable ſuch a declaration may be, that conſiſtency ſhall never depart from my character, that to the laſt moment I will preſerve the ſame fix'd and unconquerable hatred to the enemies of freedom and the conſtitution of our happy iſland, the ſame warm attachment to the friends and the cauſe of liberty, that I keep a ſteady and a longing eye on England, that my endeavours for the good and ſervice of my country, by every method left me, ſhall have a period only with my life, and that altho' I do not mean to lay any future claim to your grace's favour, I will take care to ſecure your eſteem.

Iam, my Lord,

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Your Grace's moſt obedient,
and very humble ſervant,
IOHN WILKES.

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